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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDG #2247 2761958  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 031958Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9313  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY 2104  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0826  
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY 1013  
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY 2798  
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO PRIORITY 1145  
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4706  
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 1846  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUMISTA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 002247

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR C WARD AND E JAFFEE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [DR](#)  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL STRIKE ONLY PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE

REF: A. SANTO DOMINGO 2232

[1](#)B. SANTO DOMINGO 2236

[1](#)1. (U) The 24-hour national strike ended at 6:00 a.m. on October 3. The Alternative Social Forum (FSA), a coalition of leftist social organizations and labor groups, had organized the work stoppage to protest social conditions and the poor delivery of government services (Reftels).

[1](#)2. (U) The strike was only partially effective, with business and transportation activity reduced by approximately 50 percent. EMBOFFs traveling to the Embassy from the western suburbs reported almost normal activity (one officer counted 17 buses in operation). Officers coming in from the north, where the neighborhoods are poorer, reported reduced activity. Surprisingly, there was some service by publicos (shared taxis) from FENATRANO, a union that was supposedly supporting the strike.

[1](#)3. (U) Some schools were closed. Professors, students, and employees at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (traditionally a protest center) announced their support for the strike, but the UASD was calm yesterday. Major national union confederations said that they sympathized with the strike's demands, but they did not ask their members to stop work.

[1](#)4. (U) Small, sporadic demonstrations accompanied the strike in Barahona, Salcedo, Bonao, and San Francisco de Macoris. The National Police reported six persons injured and 11 arrested throughout the country. Despite this limited protest activity, a serious incident occurred in Bani, Peravia Province, in which a police officer was murdered. The police investigation is proceeding under the assumption that the killing was related to the strike. The Embassy's operations on October 2, functioning under a liberal leave policy, were close to routine. Embassy staffing on October 3 is normal, i.e. without liberal leave.

COMMENT  
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15. (SBU) The FSA appears to have misjudged their audience. While the large Dominican working class continues to struggle to make ends meet -- despite the country's solid GDP growth -- the people did not respond in strength to the FSA's call for a national strike. The limited observance of the work stoppage was likely due to the absence of strong dissatisfaction with the Fernandez Administration's performance. While the President and his PLD party have had a mixed record in providing public services in a constrained fiscal environment, the Dominican people credit them with stabilizing the economy in the aftermath of the 2003 economic crisis. A second factor reducing the strike's effectiveness may have been "strike fatigue," since this work stoppage came only three months after the last such event.

16. (SBU) While the strike was organized by FSA, the opposition PRD party voiced rhetorical support for the work stoppage. This gave the ruling PLD an open invitation to gain political points when the strike fizzled. Francisco Javier Garcia, President Fernandez's campaign manager, told reporters that, "The results of the national strike are easy to evaluate. The people responded in a civic manner, welcoming the President's call (to remain at work), and they taught a lesson to the PRD and their 'striker' candidate." The PLD also offered an olive branch to the FSA, stating that the ruling party would consider cutting the taxes on gasoline that have driven up transportation costs for the poor commuting from outer suburbs.

(U) This report and additional information can be found on Embassy Santo Domingo's SIPRNET site,  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/>  
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